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SUNDAY
JULY 4, 1954

American Independence Day in a town which had been 85 percent destroyed by the U. S. Air Force, apparently as a result of a tragic error. I was to hear much of this during the morning, but never to have a complete elucidation of what had occurred beyond the statement by some speakers that Royan had been the most largely damaged town in France and the loss of life proportionately elevated. Now the buildings have been 65 percent restored.

We drank Pineau and signed the golden book at the Mairie; the Chevaliers of Pineau marched in procession to the fair grounds where we drank Pineau and ate the neighboring Marennes oysters. We finally wound up at a huge lunch, presided over by a 200 kilogram sturgeon, at the Pontaillac casino. Through the whole morning was woven a series of eloquent, even moving, discourses by Max Brusset, Mayor and Deputy. Like the other guests, I was stirred by his devotion to his city and constituency, and the breadth of his achievements, his extraordinary vitality, his deep fervor, his open, delightful hospitality.

Keith Officer, the Japanese and Cuban Ambassadors, several South American chiefs of mission, Vietnamese, Egyptians, English, and members of other nationalities were present in large or small force. It was, to put it in the words of one anglicized enthusiast, a "jolly good show".

I had a half-hour talk with Strauss, the Minister of the Saar to Paris. He said he was entirely in favor of Van Naters' report and had so informed Mendès-France a few days ago. According to him, the Sarrois think this is a fine deal from the standpoint of both themselves and the French. Strauss believes the position of the Chancellor has weakened ~~appreciably in Germany, and it~~ would be impossible, even in the fairly early future, to arrive at a Saar accord as generous from the German national point of view as this ~~one. He told me he~~ had warned Mendès that, if the Saar problem was not soon settled, his

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own apprehension was Germany would eventually retake, by some means or another, the territory.

We motored away in the cold, windy afternoon to Poitiers, where we embarked on the 8:00 o'clock train for Paris, receiving a vociferous midnight welcome at the house from the expectant boys.

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